

## INTRODUCTION

This is the Comprehensive Development Plan for the Village of Panama, Nebraska, as adopted by the Planning Commission on April 21, 1976, and the Village Board on May 4, 1976. The village was assisted in the preparation of this plan under the authorization of an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Lancaster County and the City of Lincoln. In compliance with Nebraska Statute 19-903, the plan consists of three components: land-use, transportation, and community facilities.

The Comprehensive Plan is an official document which will serve as a policy guide for decisions about future physical development in the Panama community. The plan indicates, in a general way, how the village should grow and develop during the next 25 years. It covers the entire village area, plus the rural countryside lying within one mile of the village limits. It considers the basic components of the community, including land-use activities, transportation, and facilities and services, which relate to local physical development.

## LOCAL PLANNING PROGRAM

The Comprehensive Plan represents a significant commitment by the Panama community to guide future growth and development. It reflects several months of intense effort by local residents to review future development requirements and growth alternatives. Key steps in the program are outlined below:

- *Interlocal Cooperation Agreement.* The overall program began when Panama entered into an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Lancaster County and the City of Lincoln through which the Lincoln City-Lancaster County Planning Department would provide comprehensive planning assistance to the village. The consulting firm of Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc. was then engaged by the Planning Department to provide professional and technical assistance for the program.
- *Community Attitude Survey.* Panama had previously laid the groundwork for the plan by sponsoring a community attitude survey in August, 1975.

The survey solicited local attitudes on such key issues as future growth, economic development, and village services and facilities. It provided valuable insights on local needs and aspirations and has been an important source in the planning program.

- *Plan Initiation.* The first official meeting of the comprehensive planning program was conducted in October, 1975. At this meeting, the overall process was discussed, individual work items explained, and a schedule established. A Project Steering Committee was appointed to monitor the program; it consists of Village Board and Planning Commission members plus two representatives from the surrounding rural areas.
- *Goals Development.* During the next two months, the Project Steering Committee took part in a series of biweekly meetings at which community goal statements were established covering community development, transportation, and community facilities. Following local review and revision, final goals were adopted by the Village Board in December, 1975. These began to define what kind of community Panama should be in the future, and they have provided important guidelines for planning decisions throughout the program.
- *Background Analysis.* Concurrently, background data was collected and mapped, including information on topography, soils, population, existing land-use, transportation, etc. These materials were analyzed, and the planning implications reported to the Project Steering Committee in the Background Work Paper in early January, 1976.
- *Major Work Session.* Results of the background studies were reviewed and discussed during a major weekend work session held in Panama January 23-24. An open house was held to explain concepts, answer questions, and receive ideas and opinions from local residents. Key land-use, transportation, and community facilities issues were discussed and plan alternatives evaluated. The weekend resulted in a preliminary version of the plan, which was agreed upon in concept by the Steering Committee.
- *Plan Adoption.* Based on the conclusions of the work session, draft comprehensive plan maps and text were prepared and delivered to the Steering Committee for review and comment. The Steering Committee made copies available at the bank, grocery store, and post office for public review. The Planning Department contacted interested regional and special purpose agencies--such as the Soil Conservation Service, the State Office of Planning and Programming, and other state and local agencies--for review. After revisions, a final draft of the plan was prepared. Following a series of public hearings and reviews, the Comprehensive Development Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission on April 21, 1976, and the Village Board on May 4, 1976.